"Shoot, If You Like!" He Said Bitterly.

"It was an accident, y'know, but—shoot, if you like."

"No," commanded Adam Ball's father, a slender and angular old man with a straggling iron-gray beard—"No, don't shoot. Shootin's too quick, by gonnies. And 'en, it ain't accordin' to law." (Queer how suddenly he respected the majesty of the law!) "We'd a durned sight ruther see him hung by the neck ontel dead in the jailyard at Cartersville. Ye'uns put down them thar guns. Put down all o' them thar guns right now; hear me?"

He turned back to Dale. "Ye say it was a accident?" he sneered.

"Yes, it was an accident."

"Like the old devil!" roared Black Adam's father.

He stopped and picked up his son's black slouch hat and examined it. There were two bullet holes close together in the rim—and one of them had been there for a long time.

"John Moreland, he's been a-l'arnin ye how to shoot," he said, "and you've shore l'arned purty d—d well. It must ha' been yore third shot 'at got Adam."

"I fired only once," disagreed Dale. "Your son fired first; I fired second; and somebody else, I haven't the slightest idea who, fired the other shot."

"Aw, shet up! Ye can tell it at the trial," growled old Ball. Then to his kinsmen.

"We'll hold Dale right here, boys, ontel the shuriff he's sent after comes. And we'll not move Adam, which same is accordin' to law. I reckon Shuriff Tom Flowers'll find a different job from what he expected to find; won't he, boys? Say, I wisht one o' you fellers'd gi' me a good, big chaw o' tobacker. Be durned ef I don't. Adam's death, it has made me feel sort o' bad, by gonnies, and tobacker's allus a consolation—

"Bill Dale, you hain't got a chaw o' tobacker on ye, have ye—bought tobacker, store tobacker? It's a durned sight better'n home-made, I says. Ye say ye don't chew! Chew—h—l! Whyn't ye say 'chaw,' like a man! I allus knowed ye wasn't no 'count, nohow. Nobody 'at don't chaw tobacker ain't no 'count. . . . All right, Jim Ike," to his nephew, "I'll take a chaw o' yores, then. And I'll take a tol'ably big chaw, Jim Ike, 'cause Adam's death has made me feel sort o' bad, and tobacker's allus a consolation."

The sounds of the shooting had carried far, and it wasn't long until the scene of the tragedy was crowded with Balls and Torreys, Littlefords and Morelands. Major Bradley and Hayes, too, were there. Every man of them was armed; a very little thing might easily turn the place into a shambles. The major saw this, and he was afraid. He drew the leaders of the Morelands and the Littlefords aside, and finally prevailed upon them to do their utmost toward keeping peace until the coming of the sheriff.

At first John Moreland and Ben Littleford were for taking Bill Dale from the Balls and Torreys who guarded him, if they had to depopulate the whole Ball settlement, Jerusalem Cove and Hatton's Hell to accomplish it! Happily, the major's counsel prevailed.

Sheriff Tom Flowers was a tall and lithe, smooth-faced man. He arrived with Luke Moreland at noon, after hours of hard riding. He saw the high tension, and immediately steeled himself to handle the situation. After riding straight to the center of the gathering and there halting his horse, he said evenly:

"In order that I may know who to arrest, I must know something of the circumstances. Only one man must speak at a time. No playing bad with me; and remember that, gentlemen. I'll certainly drop the fellow who starts playing hoss with me, if it's the last move I make on earth. Now somebody gently use his powers of speech."

Major Bradley, more soldierlike than ever, went forward. "As the attorney of Mr. Dale, who stands accused of killing Adam Ball," he said to the officer, "I beg leave to state that my client will do no talking at present."

Dale understood, and he did not open his mouth.

But old Ball had something to say, and he proceeded to say it:

"He killed my son, Adam," pointing to Dale, "in cold blood. Me and about a dozen o' my kin was on our way over Long ridge to look at a bee tree, when we heered three pistol shots. We was right up thar," pointing to the northward, "and we come a-runnin' over here to see, by gonnies, what was the matter. Well, by gonnies, we found Bill Dale thar down on his knees aside o' my son, Adam, who was as dead as h—l or deader; and Bill Dale was a-sobbin' and a-sobbin' about it. And ef he never killed my son Adam, what was he a-sobbin' and a-sobbin' about, I ax you that? And my son Adam, he had a rifle, by gonnies, but he never shot none at all. He was with us up to a few minutes before, and he hadn't shot none all mornin'. Shuriff Flowers, I wisht ye'd gi' me a good, big chaw o' tobacker, by gonnies, 'cause my son Adam his death it has made me feel bad."

Major Bradley stopped caressing his well-kept gray imperial, walked over to the dead man's rifle, picked it up and put its muzzle to his nose. He scented fresh powder-smoke. Then he faced old Ball with a strange, hard glitter in his blue eyes.

"You are a liar, sir," he said with a peculiar politeness.

A stir ran quickly over the Balls and Torreys. Sheriff Flowers called out:

"Quiet, there!" and there was quiet. He continued: "Where is Mr. Dale's revolver?"

The Balls had it. They produced it. It had three empty chambers when it should have had but one!

"Pass it to me butt first," ordered the law's representative. He knew that many a man had been shot while taking a revolver barrel first, and he was taking no chances.

Old Ball obediently turned the weapon around.

"Say, sheriff," he chittered, "have ye plumb fo'got about me axin' ye fo' a chaw o' store-bought? By gonnies, Adam's death—"

Flowers turned to Dale.

"I have heard through Luke Moreland," he said with more or less of feeling in his voice, "a good many things in your favor. I want you to know that I'm sorry to have to take you and place you in the Cartersville jail. To show you that I mean it, I'll spare you the irons and allow you to ride your own horse along beside me, as though you were not under arrest at all."

Dale had by this time worn the keen edge from his grief by means of his great will power. He bowed slightly to the officer and replied with grave courtesy:

"Believe me, sir," with the very faintest trace of a smile, "I am very much obliged to you."

Luke Moreland led up the sleek young bay that Bill Dale had named Fox, and Dale swung himself easily into the saddle. He faced the sheriff.

"If you're ready to go, sir," he said, "I am."

Together they rode through the woodland toward the broad, green valley, with the Littlefords, the Morelands, Major Bradley and Hayes following closely behind them.

Up on the side of David Moreland's mountain there had been a silent and unseen witness to the arrest of Bill Dale. She was hidden behind a gnarled and twisted clump of sheep-laurel, sitting on a patch of tiny, dainty, pure blue dayflowers—crushing in her hands the tiny purple blossoms that are known as Job's tears.

"Lord, what'll I do now?" she murmured.

It was a great and unanswerable question, and it was a prayer, too.

"Lord, what'll I do now?" she repeated.

When Bill Dale had ridden out of her sight, she threw down the crushed flowers and flung herself prostrate, with her face close to the hemlock needles and the earth, and wept low and bitterly, and wept and wept—

"Lord, what'll I do now?"

CHAPTER XI

By Heck Keeps a Secret.

When Sheriff Tom Flowers and the others had been gone for half an hour, Elizabeth Littleford sat up in the silence. It was a great and heavy silence that hovered there over the north end of David Moreland's mountain. There was not even the drumming of a yellowhammer, not even the saucy chattering of a boomer squirrel, not even the twittering of a bird. Not a leaf stirred anywhere. Everything seemed lifeless. It was almost as though she were the sole inhabitant of the world.

Then she thought. It was noontime, and the officer and his prisoner would doubtless halt at John Moreland's cabin for the noonday meal; and if she hastened she would get to see Bill Dale again.

So she ran like a doe through the green woodland, through the tangle of laurel and ivy and over the moss-covered stones, across a shoulder of David Moreland's mountain. She was barefooted, and her dress was a simple garment of white-dotted blue calico, and her long brown hair flowed behind her like the hair of a young witch—because of the excitement of the morning, she had forgotten to give it its usual daily plaiting.

As she drew near to the Moreland leader's home, she saw Bill Dale and the sheriff walk out at the gateway and mount their horses. Major Bradley came out, and he, too, mounted his horse; and she was glad that he was going along. There was a great crowd; all the Littlefords were there, and all the Morelands, and old Granny Heck, the fortune-teller. On every face Babe saw signs of sympathy and sorrow. Her eyes filled. She was so glad that they, too, loved him. It was worth going to jail to know that one was loved like that! Not that it didn't hurt to see him going to jail, of course. Jail and horror are words that mean the same to the mountain dweller.

She went on to tell him good-by. She knew it would be hard, but she steeled herself; she would be a Littleford, and strong. He saw her coming, and he turned his bay horse and rode to meet her. She stopped and clasped her hands, with her arms down full length, and tried to smile at him.

"You promised me," he said gently, "that you'd go back to Patricia and finish your education."

"I keep my promises," was the quick reply, "jest like every other Littleford that ever lived kept their promises. I would ha' went back this mornin', ef it hadn't ha' been—"

And there she broke off abruptly. After a silent moment, she continued sadly, half tearfully: "And yet—and yet—the's not a bit o' use in me a-goin' back now!"

"Why?" Dale was smiling, and she was glad to note that he did not appear to be grieving over his misfortune.

"Lord, What'll I Do Now?" She Murmured.

"'Cause the' ain't," simply.

"But you'll go?"

"Yes," she said, "in the mornin' I'll go."

He bent toward her and held down his hand. "Good-by, little girl. I hope it will come out all right, and I believe it will."

Babe slowly lifted her hand to his. Her eyes were downcast.

"Good-by," she told him brokenly. "And I hope it will come out all right, too—God knows I do, Bill Dale."

Thus they parted. Dale rode back to the sheriff and Major Bradley, and a minute later the three of them started for the lowland and Cartersville jail.

When a bend in the dusty ox-wagon road had hidden them from view, Elizabeth Littleford turned homeward. Her mother followed her.

The younger woman dropped to the stone step at the vine-hung front porch with the air of one who is very tired, plucked a full-blown marigold and began absently to tear its petals slowly apart. Mrs. Littleford looked out across the meadows, sighed, smoothed back her gray hair with both hands, and sat down beside her daughter.

"I wouldn't worry about it, Babe, honey," she finally said. Then she too plucked a marigold and began to tear its petals slowly apart. "Ef he killed Adam Ball, it was to save himself. He's a good man, honey. I think he's about the best man I ever seed, Babe."

"No, he never killed Adam Ball to save hisself even," Babe replied. "He's a fighter, but he ain't no killer. Listen, mother, it might ha' been this away:

"He is ahind of a tree, and Adam is ahind of another tree. Adam shoots at his hat, and he shoots at Adam's hat—which is the reg'lar way of a two-man fight, as you know. Well, suddenly Adam he jumps up like he's been shot, and falls a-groanin' and a-twistin'. Bill Dale, a-thinkin' he's killed Adam, comes out from ahind of his tree. Havin' drawed Bill Dale out into the open by his trick, Adam gits ready to shoot and kill him. Jest as Adam is about to shoot, somebody else shoots and kills Adam and saves Bill Dale—mebbe the' ain't time fo' anything else. Now don't ye see? And don't it all sound natchel, mother?"

"I reckon it does," granted the old woman. "But who was it shot Black Adam?"

"Somebody who is a friend o' Bill Dale's," said Babe. "Somebody who was a-follerin' Bill with the idee o' pertectin' him ef he needed it. Somebody who knowed it was dangerous fo' him to go off by hisself in the woods that away. I've got it reasoned out jest like this. . . . And whoever it was 'at was friend enough to Bill Dale to kill a man to save him will be friend enough to own up when the proper time comes and keep Bill Dale from a-bein' hung. Whoever it was 'at done it is skeered bad now, but later on he'll shore tell it, ef it'll save Bill. You jest wait and see, mother.

"I hain't never fo'got," Babe went on, after a moment, "about Black Adam Ball a-tellin' me about a-workin' that same trick on a man over in Nawth Ca'liner—and he killed the man. The law never found it out. And ye see what Black Adam got. 'Who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword.' It's in the Good Book, mother, honey; and everything in the Good Book is God A'mighty's truth, as you know."

"Ef I was pinned down to guess who it was 'at done it," drawled Mrs. Littleford, "I'd guess it was By Heck. He was a plumb fool about Bill Dale. His maw she says he talks in his sleep about Bill Dale. He was allus a-follerin' him around like a dawg."

(To be Continued.)

The Story of Our States

By JONATHAN BRACE

XXXVIII.—COLORADO

COLORADO is the most precious of our states, for in the mining of gold and silver it surpasses all other States, producing about one-third of the total output of the entire country. In fact, its real history starts in 1858, when gold was first discovered.

Prior to that time there had been but little settling in this region. Spanish explorers had traversed the country in the latter part of the Eighteenth century, and laid claim to it. As a part of the Louisiana Purchase it came into the possession of the United States in 1803. Officers of the United States army were sent out to explore this wilderness among whom were Lieutenant Pike in 1806, and it was after him that Pikes Peak was named. In 1819 Colonel Long made extensive explorations and he was followed in 1842 by Fremont, whose activities in the Mexican war brought him into much prominence. At the close of the Mexican war, Mexico ceded her rights to this territory to the United States, but it was considered a barren waste and unattractive for settlers.

Then in 1858 came the discovery of gold in the bed of Dry Creek, a few miles south of where Denver now stands. The following spring tens of thousands of men flocked into what was then called the Pikes Peak country. In 1859 Denver became a town of one thousand inhabitants, and by the next year had grown into a big city with newspapers, theaters, and a government mint.

In 1861 the Territory of Colorado was created and in 1876 Colorado was admitted as the thirty-eighth state of the Union. Its area is 103,948 square miles and its population entitles the state to six presidential electors.

The name is taken from the Colorado river, and is a Spanish adjective meaning "colored red."

Colorado is often called the Centennial State, as it was admitted to the Union just one hundred years after the Declaration of Independence.

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OLD TIME FOX HUNT

(Continued From Page One.)

bushy-top hickory tree. It was not long before we were all there.

It was grand to see twenty odd dogs standing around that tree and barking as fast and loud as they could. The fox looked to be fat and proud as he sat perched on that hickory limb—seemingly, from the cut of his eye or the toss of his head, bidding defiance to dog and man, and saying by these actions, "if you give me half an hour's rest I'll defy you to do this again."

Excitement Intense.

Our anxiety was too great to see the end—we could not wait. Twenty odd dogs and nearly that many men encircled the tree, and someone threw a chunk of wood at him, and out he jumped, seemingly in the mouths of half a dozen dogs. But he rose, as it were, by the time he hit the ground, and, jumping over dogs' and men's heads, was gone again. In and around the old field he ran, doing his best to elude dogs and men. Men, drunk with excitement, would run over one another and fall down in their reckless speed; horses, abandoned, were scampering everywhere, excited and full of play. The fox, seemingly caught one minute, would arise with new vigor and try for his life again. First here and there he would go, jumping over obstacles in his way. Men, hatless, could be seen in their efforts to outrun some dog, holloing as loud as they could and momentarily crazed with the excitement that possessed all.

It is strange how men and boys will act at such a time, forgetting self and self-control, doing things they know nothing of, and how amazed they are when afterwards told of what they did. Many a hearty laugh was enjoyed by all as someone would tell how so-and-so did. I have forgotten who tailed the fox and wore his bushy plume home in his hat or on his horse's head. As was the custom then, we drew straws for his feet and departed for our homes after expressing our pleasure and satisfaction as to how it had all ended.

I think this was one of the most exciting fox races I was ever in, and many a time in passing that way has my mind reverted to that day, when I was young, and to the friends I had then, and to many other times. These recollections are pleasant to think about now. One almost lives his life over in the rehearsal of these things.

—The Secretary of State and the State Historian of Alabama are women.

TO SETTLE IN PERU.

American Farmers Move to the Amazon Headwaters.

A group of American farmers, comprising the advance guard of a colonization scheme said to involve more than two hundred families from the western United States, arrived at Lima, Peru, recently, enroute to the Pama del Sacramento valley along the western headquarters of the Amazon river, in northern Peru, where the colony is to be established.

The party is in charge of J. B. Schoenfelt of Omkulgee, Okla., formerly United States Indian agent for Oklahoma territory, who obtained for colonization purposes, a grant of 650,000 acres of agricultural and forestry lands from the Peruvian government last October.

After the preliminary location of the lands in the concession is completed, it is planned to bring the remaining colonists, numbering about 800, to the settlement via Para, Brazil and the Amazon and Ucayali rivers. The former is navigable from its mouth on the Atlantic ocean to Iquitos, Peru, about 2,000 miles.

In an interview published in the West Coast leader, Mr. Schoenfelt said that, owing to drouth and crop failure, a number of farmers in the central west had expressed their desire to seek more fertile and profitable fields.

"I decided to look over South America," he said, "since most of the American government's desirable vacant lands, that could be obtained at a low price, have been allotted to foreign immigrants. The colonists, who are chiefly from the west, are farmers of some means and they can secure their farms at a cost of a few cents per fee simple to their lands, as soon as 200 families have been settled on the concession."

—The smallest species of women is found in Lapland. They average four feet nine inches in height.